(Positive) Affectivity in a Foreign Language Classroom: Trainees' Response to an Introductory Course in Positive Psychology

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Abstract One of the main pillars of positive psychology is the role our emotions (affectivity) play in various contexts of life; it follows that it also plays such a role in the language classroom (Dewaele et al., 2019; Gabryś-Barker, 2016). The power of affectivity is also exposed very strongly in the other assumptions of positive psychology: our strengths and weaknesses (the second pillar) and in the fundamental principles of enabling institutions (the third pillar) (Seligman, 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2016). This chapter brings together an interest in positive affectivity and the need for the development of effective teacher training programmes for undergraduate students who are prospective EFL teachers. The underlying belief is that it is the teacher that takes responsibility for his or her classes and individual learners in communicating and interacting in the process of language instruction. At the same time, it is believed that to some extent teachers also contribute to the personal development of their learners. The data presented here consists of the reflections of trainee teachers on their experience of positive psychology classes, introduced as part of a TEFL module in their programme of studies to become FL teachers, and its contribution to altering the students' frame of mind in understanding what teaching a foreign language embraces. The observations made will be the basis for the implications for improving content of a pre-service training of future FL teachers, focusing on affectivity awareness brought about by the introduction to positive psychology in TEFL classes at the university.

Keywords Positive psychology · Language tasks · Affectivity · Interaction · Personal development · Teacher training programme

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187

1   Introduction

When staring my career as an EFL teacher many years ago in a typical secondary school in Poland, I was given a chance to work with students whose basic knowledge of English had already been acknowledged by entrance proficiency tests and who seemed to have been very motivated to develop their ability in English further. The training I received at the university at that time in the old educational/political system was very traditional and restrictive. There was no access to novel methods, not to mention the scarcity of language materials to use by a highly motivated class of language students, for whom a prescribed course-book was never enough. For any newly qualified teacher, still idealistic about the job, the situation was pretty frustrating and required additional efforts and ingenuity in searching for something new, something more creative. Also, what seemed to count and constituted one of the more decisive factors in becoming a successful EFL teacher at that time was my own personal history of learning English as a foreign language (in the very same school!). This was four years of experience of being taught by a Scottish native speaker, a lady who did not have any pedagogical qualifications but who put her heart into teaching and thus not only became a success as a teacher but also as a trainer and real mentor to her future colleagues, new teachers of English. I was one of them, at a fairly dark time for language instruction in the early seventies as it was conceived in state-run schools.

Another factor in my career as a teacher was accidental access to a publication which I still cherish as an EFL teacher of over forty years of experience and which, as a teacher trainer, I never fail to recommend to my students. It was a book by Gertrude Moskowitz (1978) entitled *Caring and Sharing in a Foreign Language Class*, which I believe is the first publication on how the principles of humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers and others could be implemented in foreign language instruction. In my mind, it constitutes a starting point for positive psychology's presence in educational settings, a long time before it became acknowledged as a branch of psychology by Seligman and colleagues in 2000 with their "Manifesto." Before then, Gertrude Moskowitz had already articulated her deep belief that (language) education should embrace not only the cognitive but also the affective dimension of human functioning in life, and thus was integral to becoming successful in one's educational endeavours, whether as teacher or learner. What she emphasised was the role of positive emotions, one's strengths (signature strengths) and positive institutions putting the former into practice (for example in schools). In fact, these are the main pillars of positive psychology (see Budzińska, MacIntyre, & Seidl, this volume).

To my great satisfaction, the above beliefs which I held as a FL teacher a long time ago, and which were very much intuitive and partly based on experience when I first started my professional career at school, have now found their way into what constitutes a legitimate branch of psychology, positive psychology. This field is supported by theoretical discussion and empirical evidence coming from research on foreign language teaching and learning by such people as Rebecca Oxford, Sarah Mercer and Peter MacIntyre. Their contributions and the new approach turned out to

be for me an exciting way of dealing with (inevitable) routine and helping to avoid professional burnout in my career as an academic teacher, researcher, but mostly, as a FL teacher trainer.

How can positive psychology function in a teacher training educational environment? Should it constitute a part of this training and how would EFL trainees respond to such a course? These are the main concerns of this chapter and my own concerns as a teacher trainer, constantly searching for new ways to frame the minds of future teachers of foreign languages in such a way that they will not only be successful professionals but will also enjoy their work in and beyond their (FL) classrooms.

2   Trainee Beliefs and Their Well-Being

In their university training period as well as in their school placement and first classroom experiences, FL trainees have certain views on what constitutes FL teaching and learning which strongly influence the way they position themselves as teachers. As I mentioned elsewhere:

> Pre-service and novice teachers do not come empty-handed to their classrooms. They come from certain contexts (educational, personal, social); they have different values and beliefs. They are different on the personal level, educationally and experientially. What they bring is temporary, it fluctuates and evolves with time to finally reach the stage of relative stability.
>
> (Gabryś-Barker, 2012, p. 30)

As is generally believed—following from Richard and Lockhart 1994 to more recent publications on the topic of teachers' and trainee teachers' beliefs (for example those by Gabryś-Barker, 2015; Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006; Loughran & Russell, 2002), trainees' views derive first of all from their individual experiences as foreign language learners, which is most visible in the way they perform during their school placement periods, usually imitating their own teachers (in some cases despite their initial disapproval of their techniques!). Also, as novices, they are exposed to the established practices and routines of a given school, which may not fully comply with their own personal beliefs about what successful FL instruction, should be like and where the focus of foreign language instruction should be. This may occur, for example, when priority is given to grammar teaching because of the final tests proposed by the school versus a communicative focus as fulfilling the major practical needs of language use that newly qualified teachers are convinced of. The trainees are either still involved in or have newly completed their theoretical courses in pedagogy and psychology, FL methodology and language acquisition theory. What they learn does not always correspond to what they see in practice or, alternatively, we can assume that they are still not able to assess the appropriacy of certain theories as applied to different teaching contexts. So, on the one hand we have the initial beliefs that influence the frame of mind which a teacher trainee brings to the classroom, and on the other, the insecurity of a novice teacher results in fluctuations in these beliefs, which in fact are only held provisionally. The first individual teaching experiences

combined with knowledge gained in the training programmes, initial reflection, first successes and failures all impact on and direct the evolution of the frame of mind of a trainee.

Having studied the evolving character of trainee teachers' beliefs, I observed that there is a dramatic difference between how they approach their future work as FL teachers at the beginning of their studies and how they see it towards the end. As summarised elsewhere (Gabryś-Barker, 2015), the following observations comparing the initial views (visions) and the present day (revisions) can be presented. The initial negative or at best, neutral attitude to EFL profession of these trainees turned into much more positive, if not exactly enthusiastic, views on teaching as a job. The early belief that the job of a FL teacher is easy and based on routine behaviours in the classroom evolves into one that is seen as difficult and more often than not, quite challenging, taking the form of a mission. Also, a static view on language and competence in a foreign language use is replaced by the view that developing one's foreign language abilities is a life-long personal story of continuous development. The initial belief that FL teaching focuses on rule-governed instruction gives way to a very strong emphasis on the role of communication and culture in teaching/learning a FL. The initial trainees' views based on their own learning experiences mostly disappear or evolve with time due to their experience of the school placement and their own classroom presence. The changed beliefs also originate in a strong emphasis on learning and the learner and not on teaching as the end in itself. EFL teachers as models evoked by trainees' memories of learners were replaced by their own experience in class (practicum), creating a new model (Gabryś-Barker, 2015).

It needs to be emphasized that with the passing of time during their studies, the influences on the evolution of beliefs as expressed by the trainees were also strongly impacted by the new experience of being university students now and the way they were/are taught in their training institutions—teacher training colleges and universities, so very different from the early educational context of primary and secondary schools. Knowledge gathered as the result of their studies is seen to be essential for their teaching success, as the developmental character of trainees' beliefs led them to the testing of pedagogical theory, which contributed most significantly to teaching approaches and beliefs expressed. They also admitted either to copying (successful teachers) or rejecting the models of the past with almost equally strong emphasis by taking a more critical approach to their schoolteachers. At the same time, in the words of the trainees themselves, it was their experience of the school placement that constituted the major factor in their evolving beliefs on FL teaching and learning.

The previous study demonstrated that the trainees developed a more idealistic frame of mind as future teachers than the one expressed at the beginning of the study and in some cases, even moved from skepticism about the job to a belief in it as a mission. This demonstrates that both the knowledge received, and practical experience combined with authentic involvement in teaching are two important and complementary sides to the process of training a future, successful teacher. One important aspect of the above becoming true is the need to implement in the trainees the need to reflect and thus to develop professionally, as it clearly was in the case of the group in

this study (Gabryś-Barker, 2012). Through this developmental process, the trainees became more aware of the challenges they would have to face as teachers and who were becoming more aware of themselves as teachers and as people. They became more aware and more oriented towards their learners and developed more creative ways of sharing their knowledge. What also resulted from a reflective approach to the teaching ingrained in these students was the realisation of the need for constant self-development, implementing the reflective approach in various dimensions of the teaching–learning continuum (ibid.). As expressed by one of the trainees "I think that teaching is very demanding but also challenging and thus, fascinating. It requires a constant development of the teacher." Thus, metaphorically speaking, the students believed that teaching is "a mission to be accomplished (…), a highly specialist job requiring professionalism (…), a sharing of knowledge developed through study and experience (…), performing a well-prepared role (…)." The metaphors of a victorious battle, a lighthouse showing the way in difficulties, a guided tour or acting on the stage were cited by the trainees expressing their individual understandings of what teaching a FL meant to them (Gabryś-Barker, 2012, p. 44).

3 Methodology of the Present Study

The present study continues my interest in developing the most effective ways of training future foreign language teachers, in which openness to change and innovation, creativity and making use of various areas of knowledge and expertise that may have a significant bearing on a teaching success are the driving forces. I believe one of those areas of innovation and change is offered by positive psychology in education, interest in which is becoming more and more visible with the work of psychologists and applied linguists (Budzińska, 2018; Gabryś-Barker, 2014, 2016, 2018; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016) and other scholars as well as practicing (FL) teachers.

3.1 Research Focus of the Study

The aim of the present study is twofold. Firstly, it proposes to introduce briefly the objectives, syllabus and procedures implemented in teaching an introductory course in positive psychology in the context of FL instruction—as a pilot of a new module in TEFL at the university level in teaching specialization groups. Secondly, and most importantly, it reports on a study expressing the EFL trainees' response to the above course.

3.2   The Subjects

The subjects of the study were twenty-seven university students whose target was to become foreign language teachers on completion of their B.A. and later on, an M.A. programme of study giving them full qualifications from the English philology department of the University of Silesia. At the moment of data collection, they were in their second year and had just completed a course in general TEFL methodology and joined an additional TEFL module described as *Innovative and creative approaches to teaching a FL.* They were also involved in a school placement embracing mostly classroom observations but also some hours of teaching English as a foreign language. Most of the students in this group were quite ambitious, well-motivated as well as open-minded, thus ready to experiment with new things.

3.3   A New Module Syllabus and Its Sources

Being part of a FL teacher training programme, the objective of this new module was to go beyond the prescribed syllabus of methodology which embraces an overview of the main concepts in methodology of FLT, i.e., traditional and unconventional methods of teaching, techniques used in language instruction and classroom management issues among other topics. The idea of introducing an additional model of FL instruction was to expose these trainees to more unorthodox ways of understanding the nature of the teaching process, to focus on teacher's reflection and to practice also authentic teaching within a peer-teaching paradigm.

   The choice of positive psychology as an approach to FL instruction was made by the lecturer/by me and derived from a deeply rooted belief that teaching—and especially the teaching of languages—should be treated as a holistic process, embracing not only the cognitive but also (and predominantly) the affective dimensions of both teachers and learners (as mentioned in the introduction to this text). The module that was introduced experimentally in the programme of studies was described as *Innovative and creative approaches to teaching a FL: elements of positive psychology in EFL.* In its first year of running reported here, it consisted of 15 h of lectures and 30 h of practical classes.

3.3.1   Lectures

The lectures aimed to introduce the students to the main assumptions of positive psychology as a legitimate branch of psychology, with its three main pillars (Seligman, 2002), and to emphasize their relevance in the classroom context (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016). The students were acquainted with Seligman's model of PERMA (see Budzińska, Jin et al., Kikuchi & Lake, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, & Werbińska, this volume) and a critical approach to it as expressed

by the EMPATHICS model of Oxford (2016b) (see Werbińska, this volume). The model focuses largely on language learner well-being and is also pronounced as being relevant to the well-being of language teachers and, as Oxford emphasises, it is also adaptable for the well-being of learners and teachers in other fields (Table 1).

Each of the sessions of the course related to different assumptions made by positive psychology and ways of applying them to the (FL) classroom context, looking at, among other things, positive characteristics, the emotions and feelings of teachers and learners and the role of contextual factors such as environment, and in particular, institutions (e.g., schools) and their functions. The content of the course included all the components of the EMPATHICS model, which were presented and discussed in detail during the lectures.

Each time the students were encouraged to participate by answering questions and reflecting on the issues discussed. Thus, it seems to me that they received a fairly comprehensive theoretical background to what was planned for the practical classes, that is, how to apply positive psychology to teaching English at different levels of advancement and in different age groups of learners.

3.3.2 Practical Classes

The main source for the activities presented in classes was the material put online for authorised use by Mark Helgesen, an enthusiastic and successful practitioner of positive psychology techniques in his own teaching in Japan. To this end, peer teaching was used as a form of language instruction practice, in which pairs of students presented to their peers a set of individually selected tasks based on positive psychology assumptions. The online source was often used; however, quite a few students challenged themselves by making use of their own ideas for the tasks.

The classes ran according to a prescribed structure, where each pair who were presenting (and peer teaching the activities) followed these instructions:

– *Introduce the title and the aims of a given activity focusing both on linguistic objectives (what language element is to be taught) and affective objectives (possible feelings evoked).*
– *Peer-teach the activity.*
– *Assess the activity by conducting a discussion stage with appropriate questions relating to the feasibility of using a given activity and possible contexts of its use, its strong points and possible problems.*

The set used consisted of tasks classified by Helgesen: *Remember good things, Do kind things, Say thank you, Friends and family, Forgive, Health and your body, Mindfulness* and *Work with problems and stress* (source: Marc Helgesen et al., https://www.eltandhappiness.com). Each of the tasks was accompanied by a worksheet, in which not only the activity was presented but also the objectives were explicitly expressed as those referring to both the language focus and affective dimension of the task. Here is a sample worksheet for a *Thank you to the world* activity based on Marc Helgesen (Fig. 1).

Table 1 EMPATHICS (based on Oxford, 2016b)

Feature	Understanding of the concept
Emotion and empathy	The human brain is not only a cognitive brain but also an emotional brain, relating **thoughts, emotions, and motivation** (Le Doux, 1998)
	(…) cognition and emotion cannot be separated thus, **emotion is an important dimension of learning** (Le Doux, 1998)
	Empathy is both **cognitive and emotional.** It is an *"other-oriented emotional [and cognitive] response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else"* (Batson, Ahmad, & Lishner, 2009, p. 418)
	Empathy comprises **compassion, sympathy, and caring for oneself and for the others** (Oxford, 2016c)
Meaning and motivation	Positive psychology believes that all people are **goal-seeking** and active in defining goals and meaning for their own endeavours (Linley, Nielsen, Wood, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010) by making sense of their experiences and using energy in the directions making sense for individuals (Steger, 2011)
	(…) motivation refers to a cumulative arousal, or want, that we are aware of" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 209)
Perseverance, including resilience	**Perseverance** means a continuous effort to reach one's aims and targets, irrespective of challenges, problems and difficulties, or even failures accomplish something valuable despite problems, opposition, difficulties, or failures
	Resilience is an ability to adapt in situations of risk or some form of adversity to go on (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2012)
Agency and autonomy	**Agency** means active engagement in actions (such as learning) in an autonomous way, defining the relevance and significance of the (learning process (action) and controlling it (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006)
	Autonomy means taking responsibility for one's actions and behaviour with specific focus on learning strategies and self-regulation (Benson, 2012; Little, 2007; Oxford, 2016a)
Time	Positive psychology understanding of time (following Zimbardo (2002, p. 62) is in *the value of an optimally balanced time perspective, in which "past, present and future components blend and flexibly engage, depending on a situation's demands and our needs and values"*

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Feature	Understanding of the concept
Habits of mind	The concept refers to *composite(s) of many skills, attitudes, cues, past experiences, and proclivities (…)* **patterns of intellectual behavior***that we value more than other such patterns and that we choose to enact at certain times and in particular contexts* (Costa & Kallick, 2008, para. 7)
Intelligences	Each person has **a certain set of intelligences**, defined as sets of **biopsychological potentials** to process information (…). Gardner (2006) classifies them into musical, logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal (social), intrapersonal (introspective), existential (largely spiritual), naturalistic (ecological, environmental) (Gardner, 2006)
	Positive psychology put emphasis on **emotional intelligence** understood as the ability *to understand feelings* **in the self and others***and to use these feelings as informational* **guides for thinking and action** (Salovey, Mayer, Caruso, & Yoo, 2011, p. 238)
Character strengths	Positive psychology classification of virtues and character strengths embraces: **6 virtues** of wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice and temperance and respectively **24 character strengths**, for example: creativity, curiosity, judgment or critical thinking, love of learning, perseverance, honesty or authenticity, zest or vitality, love, kindness, social intelligence (emotional and personal intelligence), teamwork, fairness, leadership, self-regulation, gratitude, hope, humour, and spirituality (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)
Self-factors, especially self-efficacy	A psychological definition of **self-efficacy** according to Bandura (1997, 2006) defines it as one's level of belief in oneself (self-confidence) when performing an action towards a well-defined goal in a given context by the circumstances (**situated/contextualized**)

On completion of the course, the students were asked to assess and respond to the course they participated in in the form of a personal, experiential narrative text of 400 words. There was no detailed instruction given so that the students would not be directed in their reflections in any way, thus making sure they felt free to focus on what they found to be of importance and of value.

4 Data

The different dimensions of reflection that the narratives brought expressed trainees' experience in relation to both themselves as human beings but also as future teachers and they commented on the effects these activities had on them. They also reflected

> ## "Thank you" to the world
>
> Happy people thank people. They also notice good things in their lives.
>
> Examples:
>
> - I want to say *grazie* to Italy. They gave the world some great art.
>   *They gave the world pizza, too.*
>
> - I'll say "*shukran*" to Egypt. They created math.
>   *I don't like math, but it is important.*
>
> - I want to say "*she she" (xie xie)* to China because I love Chinese food.
>   *Me, too.*
>
> **Task**: Work with a partner. Can you say "thank you" in other languages?
> Which ones?
>
> Write the "thank you" words in other languages. Write the countries on the line. Write the reasons below:
>
> ***"Thank you"* word: .... country: .... reasons: …….............**
> Join another pair. Share your ideas.
>
>
>
>   **Objectives of the task:**
>   Language focus - giving reasons
>   Positive psychology focus - Happy people express gratitude
>
>
>   Adapted from: Marc Helgesen, www.ELTandHappiness.com, 2012

Fig. 1 *Thank you to the world* activity

upon the didactic aspects of the tasks in relation to teaching a foreign language. Thus, the presentation of the data here falls into the following categories of analysis:

– Life changing perspective
– Teaching/learning facilitation in and beyond the classroom
– Assessment of a positive psychology course
– "Problems" with positive psychology classes

The generally agreed-upon belief expressed in these narratives sees the main aim of introducing elements of positive psychology as "Changing negativity into positivity" (subject 7) as if following on from what Helgesen said:

> For starters, we know that happy students:
>
> – learn more.
> – work longer at tasks.
> – approach those tasks with more enthusiasm (…).
>
> We also know that, as they are feeling good, the neuron connections—learning centers—are lighting up with serotonin, endorphins, and dopamine—those "feel good" neurotransmitters that go along with learning (www.Elthappiness.com)

The study is qualitative in nature, so the data analysis does not seek to interpret the opinions expressed by the trainees quantitatively. At the same time, the codification of the individual reflections in each narrative establishes the main inductive categories present in the whole corpus, allowing the highlighting of the proportions between the major categories, i.e., life changing perspective, teaching/learning facilitation in and beyond the classroom, and the (possible) problems and challenges positive psychology classes may face. It can be observed that 60% of the reflections shared by the trainees focus on the facilitative dimension of positive psychology approaches for both FL teaching and learning processes in and beyond the classroom. Thus, the course implemented as a new module in TEFL methodology seems to have met its objective in encouraging a new approach to FL teaching. At the same time, 10% of the comments also report on the possible challenges and difficulties a positive psychology approach might generate in a FL classroom. What is also quite significant is that having been introduced to positive psychology theory and classroom practice, 30% of comments point to the development of a different, life-changing perspective by the trainees, not just as future teachers but also as people. The general assessment of the course is very favourable, and the students expressed their appreciation very forcibly. All this is evidenced in the comments presented below.

4.1 Life Changing Perspective

The following quotations from the students testify to how significant the course they participated in was for their own well-being:

> First of all, I want to admit that positive psychology classes made me very happy: I started to see good things in daily living about which I have never thought before. I realised that what is good in life is not simple the absence of the problematic. (s. 10)

> I found positive psychology very helpful and useful in everyday life (…) Those classes made me more confident and changed my attitude to life. (s. 1)

These activities can be used in everyday life (…) in moments of crisis or to help us get better. (s. 16)

It relates positive things in our lives with knowledge that we have to assimilate/learn. (s. 6)

These classes were really important for me, as I am a rather pessimistic person (…) I could change my perception of the world and other people (…). (s. 9)

Some of activities changed my point of view on many things (…) They made me more confident and I started to believe in myself and share good things about others (compliments on the backs), sharing outside crying mother—a person to whom grateful) (…) it started to be my daily routine (good things) I started to care more about my body (physical health). (s. 10)

These activities made us think about all the small things in our lives we should be aware of and grateful for (…) A change in thinking (…) we need it more and more to cope with the problems of everyday life. (s. 17)

Importance of forgiveness (more than nice things about oneself), but also strengthening links between mates (…) nice variation, fun. (s. 23)

I learnt to focus on my strengths more than on weaknesses, finding reasons to be happy every day. (…) They opened my eyes to things I did not notice previously. Now I am more confident and grateful person. (s. 25)

Some important reflections disclosed, that were shared by the students in their narratives, point to the fact that

- positive psychology course was not just treated as another element in their programme of studies but made a significant contribution to their self-development as people and greater ease in life;
- the experience impacted on the students' outlook on life, introducing a much-needed positivity;
- it developed more confidence in some of the trainees not only as students but as human beings;
- it emphasised the need to focus on one's strengths (signature strengths);
- a more acute awareness of oneself was also complemented by a more open attitude to others and enhanced noticing other people's responses;
- importantly, more appreciation was developed for the small things in life and their contribution to the students' well-being.

4.2 Teaching/learning Facilitation in and Beyond the Classroom

The vast majority of comments and reflections made by the trainees expressed their awareness of how the implementation of positive psychology tasks can facilitate teaching by giving it a different dimension and making it more creative as well as making the learning process more effective. At the same time, it contributes to the learners' well-being and development as language users and as people. Here is their testimony on the effects of positive psychology in a FL classroom.

- **Motivation, creativity in a FL class**

  Positivity should be a big part of our daily routine. It can also be with us in a classroom, which will undeniably make FL lessons more exciting and colourful, and our students more motivated, inspired and happy, However, we should be careful with the quantity and quality of activities we use not to have opposite effects. (s. 8)

  (positive psychology techniques) can make teaching and learning a FL more humanistic and therefore, less artificial: Positive relationships between T & Ls Mutual awareness of positive things about each other (…) An observant teacher sees his students' strengths (…) holistic self-development (self-awareness of who we are as teacher and learners. (s. 2)

  Nowadays the motivation of students is much lower. That is why positive. psychology. is important. Even easy to do exercises can be a good motivation (…) young people like to talk about themselves and their feelings (…). Some of the teachers cannot share positivity (…) the teacher is the one that sets the mood (…). Positive psychology tasks also develop emotional maturity of students and teachers. (s. 3)

  Students are getting bored with routine (…) learners are passive, they lack enthusiasm (…) five-minute positive activities will be liked by everybody (…) with young learners and older learners. (s. 4)

  What can be successfully applied in life, can be also applied in teaching (…) I found activities motivating and became more self-conscious (before applying it in the classroom, teachers should) applied tasks to themselves (to become self-conscious), source of motivation and enthusiasm (…) (s. 7)

  (…) an unconventional way of looking at coursebook topics, thinking about issues we do not always have time to consider. (s. 12)

- **Climate, rapport, effective relationships in a FL class**

  (positive psychology techniques) can make teaching and learning a FL more humanistic and therefore, less artificial. Positive relationships between T & Ls Mutual awareness of positive things about each other (…) An observant teacher sees his students' strengths (…) holistic self-development (self-awareness of who we are as teacher and learners. (s. 2)

  It can help make students' mood better, especially when they are overwhelmed by the amount of duties and boring, repetitive lessons. These techniques diversify and enrich a lesson, they put a smile on their faces and highlight enthusiasm for learning. They create friendly atmosphere in the classroom between students and students and the teacher (s. 5)

  The relation (T-Ss) can take a step closer by applying positive exercises. e.g., at the beginning of the lesson (a warm-up) (…) as a form of reward and encouragement. This "dosed" positivity can make them more relaxed and happier. (s. 7)

  One of the most important things that a teacher should do is improve the atmosphere in the classroom (…) should be used regularly throughout the course. Happy and relaxed students will be more motivated and eager to learn and to co-operate. They will also memorise more from the contents of the lesson (…) we as teachers need to make our students more aware of those positive things and help deal with negativity (noticing good things tasks). (s. 8)

  They (the classes) were both interesting and useful for development of our language competence and teaching. They were also a great opportunity to spend time with our friends in

class in a creative way (…) it perhaps even changed the way in which we refer to each other. I search for information on pp in my spare time. (s. 11)

- **Learner strengths and learner potential in a FL class**

  (…) it can push students to realise their true potential. (s. 5)

  Learners notice things around them and may not realise that they are learning language at the same time. (s. 14)

  These tasks can be combined with any topic of the course (personality, family (…) They are a great entertainment and integrate students (cooperation, respect). Sts become self-aware and get to know their strengths. (s. 18)

  (…) providing friendly atmosphere and emotions in t-ss interaction (s. 12)

  Positive psychology tasks make students happier, lead to the production of serotonin, endorphins and dopamine, which helps them to concentrate, learn more, work longer at tasks and approach them with more enthusiasm (…) (s. 14)

  (…) they gave me positive energy and a feeling of being successful at what I have done (…) Teachers should do these activities to make students feel better because there are plenty of things that bother them and these small things can make them happier. (s. 15)

  I observed that after exercises the students were more willing to work and cooperate. (s. 16)

  Students' life is stressful, their positive emotions are diminishing (…) Ts should help build their confidence, make aware of their strengths, find a balance in life, be happy and think positively. (s. 19)

- **School as an enabling institution**

  (…) a perfect solution in the world full of violence, insults and negative emotions. School is the place to find appreciation and support (…) develop students' self-awareness, belief in their strengths (…) in a Fl class, developing both language and personalities. (s. 20)

  To help students understand their feelings and to learn to appreciate small things in life. (s. 21)

  Bad energy of a T affects the surrounding—positive psychology means to overcoming negativity (…) appreciating light-heartedness, creating distance (…) to make the class feel comfortable (emotionally secure) (…) physical health, enhancing empathy, reduces aggression. (s. 22)

  Good preparation, cooperation, trying to make others happy. Appropriacy for young learners who are lazy and spoilt to develop respect., to take them away from a computer screen. (s. 24)

  Feeling of safety and motivating to help others, be positive about each other, grateful. It brought happiness and nice atmosphere in the classroom (…) awareness of my strengths (…) (s. 26)

To sum up the above reflections, it seems that the implementation of positive psychology tasks, as they were used in this course and performed in peer teaching sessions, resulted in the trainees' powerful belief that

- they offer both the teacher and the class a much stronger motivation to teach and to learn respectively;
- positive psychology tasks decrease the teacher preparation time and are easy to prepare (which is not without value for any teacher pressed for time), there are also ready materials to be uploaded from appropriate internet pages or simply an adapted coursebook material can be used;
- the personal topics of these activities make them much more relevant for the learners where they not only disclose what they think and feel but simultaneously learn the language to do it and share with their peer group;
- this sharing is an important aspect of the FL learning process, as it demonstrates that language means authentic communication and interaction resulting in better understanding, in the group working together, sharing similar doubts and anxieties, but also importantly, joys and positivity;
- these activities are also seen as being undoubtedly a source of fun, engaging all senses/intelligences in their performance, thus being more effective tools in learning than traditional course-book based tasks.

Additionally, as a result of the above, the trainees reported that they observed a better classroom climate as they felt more secure and had a chance to express their various enthusiasms. What was also exhibited was enhanced cooperation between the students and the development of group cohesion. On the level of the individual student, the use of positive psychology had a visible impact on their emotional development and confidence in themselves as individuals and as a part of their peer group.

4.3 Assessment of a Positive Psychology Course

In their evaluation of the experience, the feature emphasized several times was the appropriacy of this kind of approach to FL instruction, which treats leaners as people at the present time when an all-embracing negativity is so often observed in their social context and which can be ascribed to the boredom and routine behaviour of both teachers and learners. These opinions are expressed in the following reflections taken from the students' narratives:

I remember these classes as one of my favourite because topics were connected with life, we could learn how to live in a good way and also get a lot of positive energy. Everything has an impact on our life. We should only learn not to notice it, how to control and handle our emotions and what's most important be positive every single day. (s. 9)

I feel better now, and I am also smiling a lot! I think that positive psychology should be taught in every school. (s. 10)

These classes opened my eyes and the knowledge about pp changed my perspective on life, teaching and learning. (s. 11)

This course on using positive psychology in a Fl class made a great impression on me and opened myself onto new perspectives in teaching. (s. 12)

Remembering good things in my life, doing kind things, saying thank you to people who help me, taking care of my body and learning to work with my problems are the most important things I will take from this course. (s. 26)

Positive psychology was seen as opening another door to reality and the classes on positive psychology, as one of the students put it, (…) definitely stood out for me from all the other subjects during our studies (subject 27). The above thoughts give evidence of what Oxford (2016b) embraced in her EMPHATICS model presented earlier (Table 1).

4.4 "Problems" with Positive Psychology Classes: A Word of Caution from the Trainees

Despite all the positive attitudes expressed by the trainees, they also voiced some criticisms and pointed out the areas of difficulty and problems both a teacher and his/her students may be faced with when using positive psychology tasks:

If students do not take them (activities) seriously, the teacher should improve them but also be aware of the current mood. (s. 4)

Some activities may seem childish (e.g., drawing a family), broken families versus task on a happy family—sensitivity of choice. (s. 5)

We must be careful with the content of the exercises (…) too personal to be presented in public, may even create negative emotions. (s. 7, 27)

Some topics may be sensitive, e.g., a family, death or life expectations. (s. 6, 23)

Individual approach of a teacher to students (shy students) (s. 18)

Not to overwhelm learners by number of tasks (…), not used as routine at every lesson (s. 8)

Age factor—not with children (too sensitive, crying) (subject 8), inappropriate because of the emotional immaturity (s. 21)

Possible noise during the activities (s. 11)

One of the trainees even said, "I have mixed feelings about these tasks" (subject 24). The emphasis of "warning" comments was mostly put on the need for teachers' sensitivity to the group and to individuals, to the present class mood and to classroom management problems which may emerge. What was also seen as essential was the teacher's ability to convince the learners of the value of these activities, which may present a novel learning experience to them and thus may be seen as intrusive or even threatening. To sum up, the trainees have strong beliefs about the nature of the tasks and offer some guidelines and warning comments to teachers.

5 Conclusions: Implications for FL Teacher Training Courses

It seems to me that my trainees involved in the introductory course to positive psychology grasped very well the essence of Rebecca Oxford's ideas presented in the EMPATHICS model (2016b) and generally, the ideas of positive psychology in the way they responded to the experiences they went through during their semester classes on positive psychology in FL instruction. As was reflected in their comments, the implementation of positive psychology ideas in a FL classroom offered them not only a different way of approaching their future work as teachers of a foreign language but also had an impact on their personal lives, a way of being and understanding their relationships with colleagues, friends and family.

The trainees also emphasised a different approach to daily experiences, taking different time perspectives on their experiences, noticing more, enjoying more. Their short one-semester experience shared with their peer group made them more open-minded, more accepting and empathetic towards themselves and others. At the same time, they became not only more self-aware but more aware of their learners, acknowledging for the first time the role of affectivity in the well-being of a teacher and his/her learners.

The dominant feeling of positivity and developing the ability to cope with negative affectivity was expressed as the main effect of the experience, having a significant impact on the university classes and the rapport between the students themselves as well as between the students and the lecturer herself. This resulted in an enhanced climate for work, autonomy and creativity.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main assumptions of positive psychology is the crucial role our emotions (affectivity) play in various contexts of life; also, in the (language) classroom context. A positive psychology course demonstrated that one of the ways of dealing with affectivity is the introduction of positive psychology, which turned out to be "an eye opening" experience for the trainees and one of them expressed her changed understanding of the teaching profession by saying: "Teaching is not only a job—it is something more, something which you have to put your heart into and be sincere."

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